



Adopting Recommendations by the Sustainable Recreation Work Group

Executive Request Legislation SB 6237(Senator Jacobsen / HB 2480 (Representative Blake)

Issue

There is increasing demand for recreation opportunities on 5.6 million acres of Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) managed state trust lands, but diminishing resources are forcing DNR to close or reduce services and recreation facilities for hikers, bikers, equestrians, off-road vehicle users and others.

- In 1990 DNR's recreation budget was nearly \$1/citizen or about \$5.4 million a year.
- In 2010 that number is only about 37 cents per citizen – about \$2.5 million each year.
- The cuts during the 2009 legislative session have compounded the problem.
- Only 15 percent of the land area managed by the agency is currently managed for recreation access.
- There is great potential for expanding recreation on existing landscapes.
- The public is clamoring for more places to recreate.

January 14, 2010 Update

Background

Recreation on DNR-managed lands

- Prior to this biennium, DNR managed 143 facilities and more than 1,000 miles of trails statewide.
- Budget cuts in 2009 have forced DNR to reduce services for or close nearly 40 facilities.
- In the past 40 years, Washington's population has nearly doubled.
- Off-road motorized use has increased eightfold in the past 28 years.
- Mountain bike use has increased in the past 20 years.

The Sustainable Recreation Work Group was created by the 2008 Washington State Legislature to make recommendations for improving recreation funding and access on state trust lands, aquatic lands, and other state-owned lands managed by DNR. (Report available at www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/amp_rec_srwg_final_report_dec2009.pdf)

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2010
Legislative
Proposal

Increase and sustain funding for recreational opportunities for Washingtonians

Authorize DNR to develop fees by rule, with public involvement, for the use of specific sites and events.

1. Direct DNR, WDFW and State parks to explore a multi-agency access pass.
2. Amend the Recreational Immunity Statute (RCW 4.24.210) to permit DNR to charge an access fee and retain the same recreational immunity as State Parks and WDFW.
3. Authorize DNR to enter into two pilot projects to evaluate the use of concessionaire contracts as a method to provide and sustain recreational opportunities.

Fiscal
Implications

Implementing this legislation will provide an essential building block in sustaining current recreation facilities and opportunities. It can establish a stable funding source, as well as provide the means to meet the current and future recreational demands of the citizens of Washington.

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